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Thursday, March 1, 2018 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

BIG CHANGES TO EAGLES

Changes coming to Eagles this offseason? 16

Doc sentenced for Philly pill mill. 3

Seven things you can't miss at the Philadelphia Flower Show. 12

IT'S ROBBIN' SEASON

'Atlanta' is back tonight. Here's everything you need to know about Season 2, plus why we need the series now more than ever. 10

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WELCOME TO METRO PHILLY

RACHAEL VAUGHAN CLEMMONS

"Atlanta" is a very special show, and tonight, its second season premieres. And since we're hashtag thankful that stories about and by black people are going mainstream again, we're telling you everything you need to know about the surreal series on page 10. Read more at **metro.us/entertainment.**

WH: TOP PRESIDENTIAL AIDE HOPE HICKS RESIGNS

Hope Hicks, one of President Donald Trump's longest-serving, most trusted aides, is resigning from her job as White House communications director. The White House announced she was leaving a day after Hicks, 29, spent nine hours in a closed hearing of the House Intelligence Committee on its investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said Hicks' decision to leave was not related to her appearance before the panel. Hicks' exact departure date was unclear but is expected to be sometime over the next few weeks. A one-time aide to Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, and with no previous experience in politics, Hicks was one of the first people hired by the then-New York businessman when he began his campaign for the presidency.

TRUMP PUSHES CONGRESS FOR BROAD BILL ON GUNS

President Donald Trump on Wednesday went his furthest yet toward endorsing restrictions on gun sales, challenging lawmakers to go big on legislation to help prevent school shootings. During a freewheeling hourlong discussion, Trump spoke approvingly of several ideas opposed by the powerful National Rifle Association gun lobby, which endorsed his 2016 candidacy, including raising the legal age to buy rifles to 21 from 18, and proposals to expand background checks for gun buyers. "I will sign it," Trump said as he urged the group of lawmakers — some favoring more gun restrictions, others averse to gun control — to avoid tailored attempts to fix holes in gun laws and embrace a comprehensive fix. Trump had been considering changes in gun laws since a gunman killed 17 people at a high school in Florida on Feb. 14.

RELIGIOUS GROUP HOLDS BLESSING CEREMONY FOR AR-15 RIFLES

3 A woman holds an AR-15 rifle during a ceremony at the World Peace and Unification Sanctuary on Wednesday in Newfoundland, Pennsylvania. The church believes the AR-15 symbolizes the "rod of iron" in the biblical book of Revelation, and it encouraged couples to bring the weapons to a "commitment ceremony." ***For more on the gun blessing, see page 3.***

GETTY IMAGES

US OLYMPIC COMMITTEE CHIEF STEPS DOWN

4 U.S. Olympic Committee Chief Executive Scott Blackmun is resigning for medical reasons, the organization said on Wednesday, following months of sustained criticism stemming from the sex abuse scandal involving former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar. In a statement, the USOC cited Blackmun's "ongoing health issues" related to prostate cancer, for which he has been receiving treatment. As part of the same press release, the group also outlined new reforms aimed at protecting its athletes from abuse. The Colorado Springs, Colorado-based USOC had resisted calls to fire Blackmun over the Nassar case. Blackmun, 60, did not attend the recent Winter Olympics. The scandal prompted the entire board of directors at USA Gymnastics to resign. It also spawned lawsuits and criminal and civil investigations.

TRUMP CALLS SESSIONS' DECISION 'DISGRACEFUL'

5 Tensions between President Donald Trump and his attorney general erupted anew on Wednesday after Trump lambasted Jeff Sessions' decision on a surveillance abuse investigation as "DISGRACEFUL." Sessions responded to the public rebuke with a terse statement in which he pledged "to discharge my duties with integrity and honor." The latest fracas began with Trump flaying Sessions for having Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz — not prosecutors — examine how the agency and the FBI obtained a warrant to monitor former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page. Trump's tweet appeared to reveal a lack of understanding of the function of Horowitz's office, which serves as an independent watchdog that investigates misconduct in the Justice Department and can refer wrongdoing to prosecutors.

Doc gets 4 years for South Philly pill mill

Doctor sold drugs to addicts and dealers without examining them and forged insurance paperwork, federal prosecutors said.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Dr. Alan Summers, 79, the former owner of a substance abuse clinic in South Philly, will serve four years in prison for illegally selling $5 million of illegal pills, federal prosecutors have announced.

Summers pleaded guilty last week to selling drugs for cash out of his clinic, National Association for Substance Abuse-Prevention & Treatment (NASAPT) at South and Wolf streets, across the street from Methodist Hospital.

He was sentenced in Philly federal court on Wednesday to four years in prison with two years of probation, and ordered to pay $4.6 million in restitution,

Dr. Alan Summers pleaded guilty to illegally selling $5 million worth of controlled substances. ALAN SUMMERS/YOUTUBE

"Dr. Alan Summers cared more for his financial gain than his oath as a doctor," Philadelphia U.S. Attorney Louis D. Lappen said in a statement. "His actions helped fuel the opioid epidemic and the illegal distribution of prescription drugs."

Summers pleaded guilty to charges including conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, specifically Suboxone, a drug used to treat opiate addiction, and Klonopin, a benzodiazepine used to treat epilepsy, anxiety and panic attacks.

Summers was charged along with doctors Azad Khan, 65, of Villanova, and Keyhosrow Parsia, 81, of Ridley Park.

"None of the defendants conducted medical examinations or mental health examinations as required by law in order to legally prescribe these controlled substances," the U.S. attorney's office said. "Dr. Summers also assisted his customers in obtaining health insurance benefits for these illegally prescribed controlled substances by providing false information to health insurance companies so that his customers could fill the prescriptions using their health insurance. ... Many of the customers who frequented this clinic were, in fact, drug dealers or drug addicts who sold the prescribed medications."

"His actions helped fuel the opioid epidemic and the illegal distribution of prescription drugs."
Louis D. Lappen, Philadelphia U.S. Attorney

Khan was convicted by a jury and is awaiting sentencing. Parsia pleaded guilty and was awaiting sentencing.

GUN BLESSING

Couples lug AR-15 assault rifles to church blessing

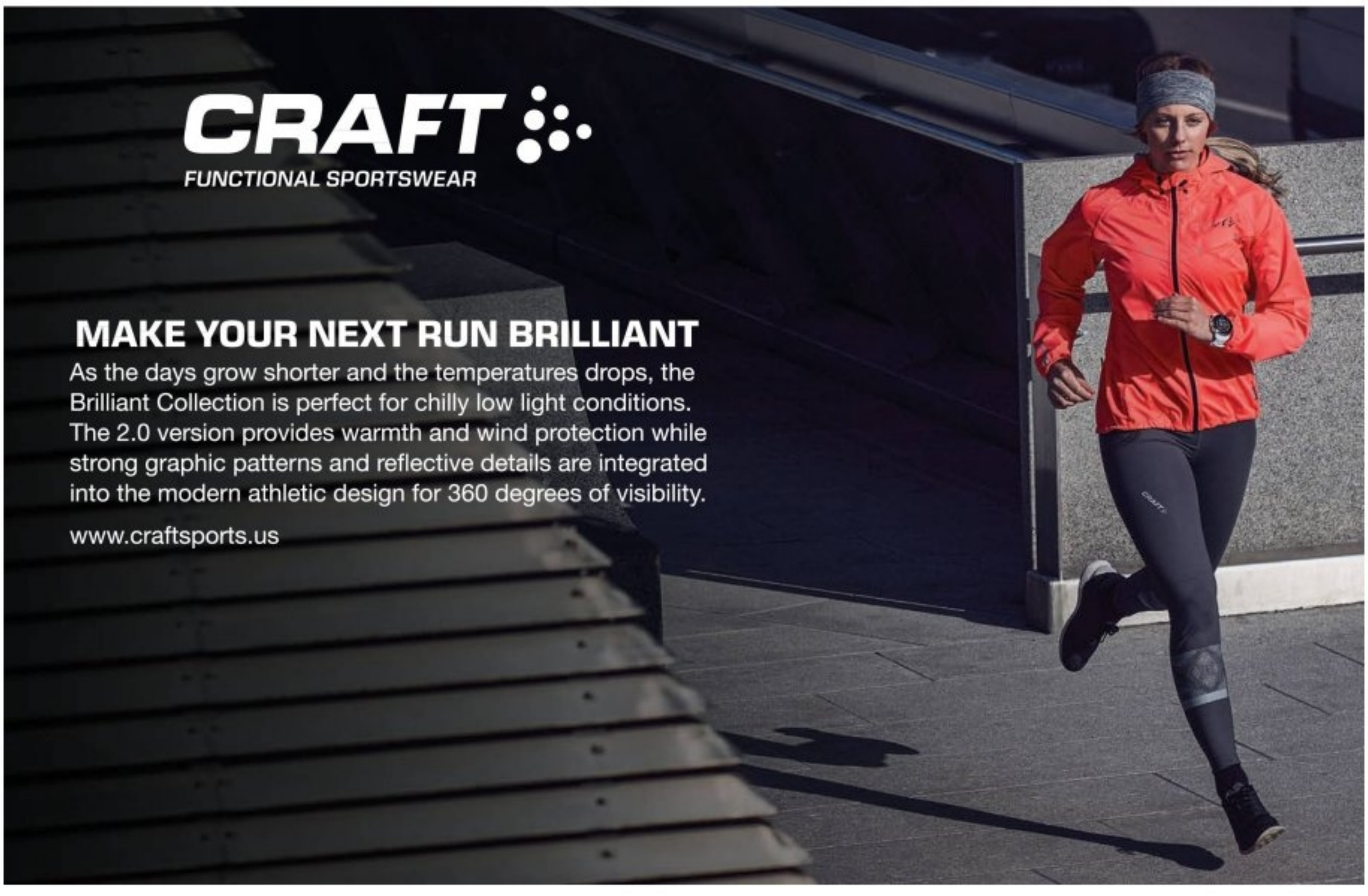
Hundreds of couples toting AR-15 rifles packed a Unification church in Pennsylvania on Wednesday to have their marriages blessed and their weapons celebrated as "rods of iron" that could have saved lives in a recent Florida school shooting.

Women dressed in white, and men in dark suits gripped the guns, which they had been urged to bring unloaded to the church in rural Pennsylvania, about 100 miles north of Philadelphia. Many celebrants wore crowns — some made of bullets.

Reverend Hyung Jin "Sean" Moon, the leader of the church, blessed the roughly 250 couples at the service, a spokesman said.

The Feb. 28 marriage blessing ceremony had been planned long before a man with an AR-15 assault-style rifle massacred 17 students and school staff in Parkland, Florida, on Feb. 14, the spokesman said.

Students from an elementary school near the church were relocated for the day to distance them from the gun-toting couples at the ceremony, according to the Wallenpaupack School District website. REUTERS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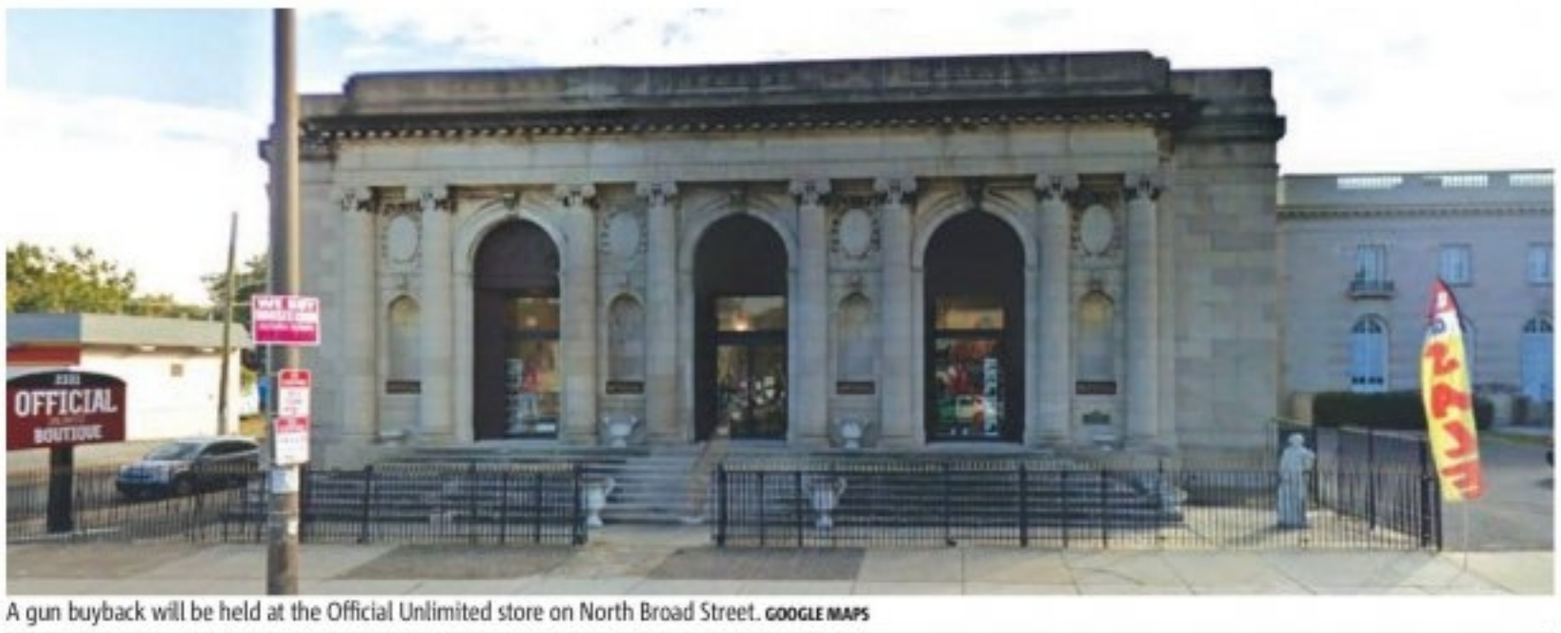

A gun buyback will be held at the Official Unlimited store on North Broad Street. GOOGLE MAPS

Local cops to hold gun buyback in N. Philly

A local businessman is supporting the effort to get guns off the streets.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Not long ago, local business owner Yoni Nadav had a terrifying encounter with armed criminals.

"Four months ago, we got robbed in my house in the middle of the night," Nadav said. "It was me, my wife and my two daughters, by gunpoint. It was four guys with guns. The trauma ... has been terrible. ... To this day, my kids cannot sleep in their own room."

But Nadav took that trauma and decided to turn it into something positive.

The robbery motivated him to reach out to Philadelphia police and start talking about addressing gun crime, he said.

On Friday, Nadav's store, Official Unlimited in North Broad Street, will be partnering with the 22nd District to hold the first gun buyback of 2018.

Citizens can get a $75 gift card to Official Unlimited, a department store selling top name-brand clothing, shoes and other products, for each surrendered gun, no questions asked.

Police are only asking that surrendered firearms be transported in a safe manner.

The principle of a gun buyback is simple: to get guns off the street, offer a reward, without fear of punishment.

Whether it's grandpa's old firearm out of the attic or a weapon someone may not know how to safely dispose of, law enforcement agencies around the U.S. have been holding anonymous gun buybacks for years to help reduce the massive number of firearms on American streets. One benefit to buybacks is ensuring unwanted guns don't fall into the wrong hands.

"A lot can change from one stupid gun," Nadav said. "If somebody gets caught with an illegal gun, he could face five years in jail. So by returning the gun, you get your money, nobody asks you a question and you can live your life. Your life can change, instead of five years in jail, [you can go] back to normal life."

Nadav said the date of this buyback was advanced after the school shooting in Florida that killed 17 students and teachers. But it's also about trying to address the gun crime that is all too common in American cities like Philadelphia, he said, and he hopes to potentially hold similar events in the Camden and Wilmington areas, near his business' other locations in the Cherry Hill and Christiana malls.

"Wherever I have a store, we're going to donate back to the community," he said. "I'm not going to be out of business because of this, because God will pay you back."

Visit officialunlimited.com for more info.

Money for guns

Official Unlimited (2831 N. Broad St.) will hold the first gun buyback of 2018 on Friday.

Individuals will receive $75 gift cards to the store for each gun turned over, and aren't required to provide any personal information.

Police are asking all surrendered weapons be transported in a safe manner.

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Congressman says Jews were killed in WWII because they didn't own guns

The historically inaccurate idea that a lack of guns caused the rise of Hitler is a common talking point among those opposed to gun control. ISTOCK

"How many Jews were put in the ovens because they were unarmed?" he asked.

MICHAEL MARTIN
letters@metro.us

A Republican Congressman from Alaska has suggested Jews wouldn't have died in the Holocaust if they had owned guns.

Donald Young, who is also an NRA board member, made his comments during a conference in Juneau, Alaska, responding to a question by Dmiri Shein, his likely Democratic challenger in the 2018 election.

"How many millions of people were shot and killed because they were unarmed? Fifty million in Russia," Young said, in comments that were recorded by Shein, Alaska Public Media reported.

"The likelihood of Hitler being able to accomplish his goals would have been greatly diminished if the people had been armed."
Ben Carson

"How many Jews were put in the ovens because they were unarmed?" he added.

The historically inaccurate idea that a lack of guns caused the rise of Hitler is a common talking point among those opposed to gun control.

Infamously, Ben Carson made that argument in 2015 during a CNN interview on the Second Amendment. "German citizens were disarmed by their government in the late 1930s, and by the mid-1940s Hitler's regime had mercilessly slaughtered six million Jews and numerous others whom they considered inferior," he told CNN's Wolf Blitzer. "Through a combination of removing guns and disseminating deceitful propaganda, the Nazis were able to carry out their evil intentions with relatively little resistance."

Carson added: "The likelihood of Hitler being able to accomplish his goals would have been greatly diminished if the people had been armed."

This theory is factually wrong in multiple ways, Vox points out: Germany was disarmed after World War I by other nations as part of the Treaty of Versailles; there were pockets of Jewish armed resistance during WWII; and relatively few of the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust lived in Germany — most came from Poland, the Soviet Union and other conquered territories in Europe.

The Anti-Defamation League said it was ridiculous to contend that German Jews could have stopped the Third Reich with personal guns.

On Wednesday, Young's office said his comments were taken out of context. "He was referencing the fact that when Hitler confiscated firearms from Jewish Germans, those communities were less able to defend themselves," a representative said in a statement to The Washington Post. "He was not implying that an armed Jewish population would have been able to prevent the horrors of the Holocaust, but his intended message is that disarming citizens can have detrimental consequences."

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The Vero app is currently ranked No. 2 among free apps in the Apple App Store. VERO

What is the Vero app and will it kill Facebook?

The new app is ad- and algorithm-free, and it aims to give users a better social media experience.

LENYON WHITAKER
lenyon.whitaker@metro.us

Vero, a social media app that was first introduced in 2015, has gained popularity in recent weeks. If you're wondering what Vero app is and why is everyone talking about it lately, or if it will be a social media network that will replace other popular social media networks, we can help.

It appears that nobody was talking about the Vero app a week ago but the big question seems to be why has it become so popular lately? The Vero app is currently ranked as the second-rated free app in Apple App Store, with YouTube being first and Instagram third.

What is the Vero app?

Vero, or its full name Vero — True Social, is a social app that is somewhat like other social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. It allows users to share pictures, videos and text like some of the more popular apps, but without being bombarded with advertisements and the effects of algorithms.

One of the reasons why the app is becoming so popular right now is because there are no algorithms in Vero. One of the biggest frustrations people have with Facebook and Instagram is not being able to see posts in chronological order on their feeds.

"The feed is composed of your posts and the posts of people you're either connected with or people you follow," according to Vero. "We don't curate it, manipulate it, insert advertising in it, or hold back posts. You see what has been shared with you, when it's been shared with you." They also add that users will not be able to pay to"boost" their posts to increase visibility.

The app will allow you to place the people you connect with into different tiers: close friends, friends and acquaintances. You also have the option to add people as followers.

Is the Vero app free?

Because Vero promises to be ad-free and make the subscribers its primary focus, you might be wondering how the app will make money. According to Vero's manifesto page, the app aims to "focus solely on delivering the best social experience instead of trying to find new ways to monetize our users' behavior or tricking them back into the app with notifications."

They'll still need to make money to survive, though, and they have a simple solution to this problem: Vero is a subscription-based app. According to the company, the first million people to join the app will be given a free Vero subscription for life. After that, new users will be charged "a few dollars" a year, according to CNBC. Vero hasn't released the exact cost of the annual subscription yet.

The company announced they are extending the offer for a free Vero subscription for new users until further notice due to some service interruptions.

The Vero app is free to download for Android and iOs devices.

Who owns Vero?

Ayman Hariri, a billionaire and the son of assassinated Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, launched the app in 2015 and is the company's CEO. According to CNBC, Hariri launched the app because he was frustrated with how existing social networks operated.

"When I did join existing social networks, I found the options for privacy were quite limited and difficult to understand, and also when I decided to get on and connect with a few of my friends, I noticed that their behavior online was very different than their behavior in the real world," he told CNBC in a telephone interview.

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Can you clone a canine?

Two cloned Beagles, Magic and Stem, are shown at the National Seoul University in South Korea. GETTY IMAGES

Barbra Streisand did it — would you?

SAM BRODSKY
Samantha.Brodsky@metro.us

A feature published in Variety this week revealed that legendary entertainer Barbra Streisand's two dogs, Miss Violet and Miss Scarlett, are actually clones of her late Coton de Tulear, Samantha, who died in 2017. But can you clone a dog, really?

Yes! (Barbra did it, after all.)

Metro spoke with Ron Gillespie, the founder of PerPETuate, Inc., the world's first animal genetic preservation company established 20 years ago.

Gillespie's facility has done cell preservation for everything from parrots to horses and even a "rare exotic zebra." But, he said, "95 percent are dogs and cats, and we do twice as many dogs as we do cats."

Here's how it works: Two skin biopsies from your dog "about the size of pencil erasers" are sent to the PerPETuate lab in Massachusetts where they "culture and cryopreserve" viable DNA, or a cell line.

"We digest the cells in enzymes, segregate them and grow as many as two to three million," Gillespie said. These viable cells are then sent to one of two cloning facilities — ViaGen based in Texas and Sooam Biotech Research Foundation in South Korea — where they develop embryos from these cells.

Gillespie explained that they take unfertilized egg cells from a surrogate female dog and, in simple terms, "suck out all the DNA that's inside those eggs" and transfer the DNA from "your dog's egg cells into the female dog's egg cells." These are struck with "a shot of electricity" and start multiplying. Once embryos develop, they are implanted into the surrogate mother.

When should I clone my dog, and how much does it cost?

It's better for an owner to start this process when their dog is alive because, "if you wait until your animal is deceased, you only have one chance to get a viable cell line and you have no alternative," Gillespie stated.

But once your dog's cell line is deemed viable, you don't need to clone your dog right away — these cells can be frozen and preserved until you're ready, which Gillespie said could be "a week later or 20 years later."

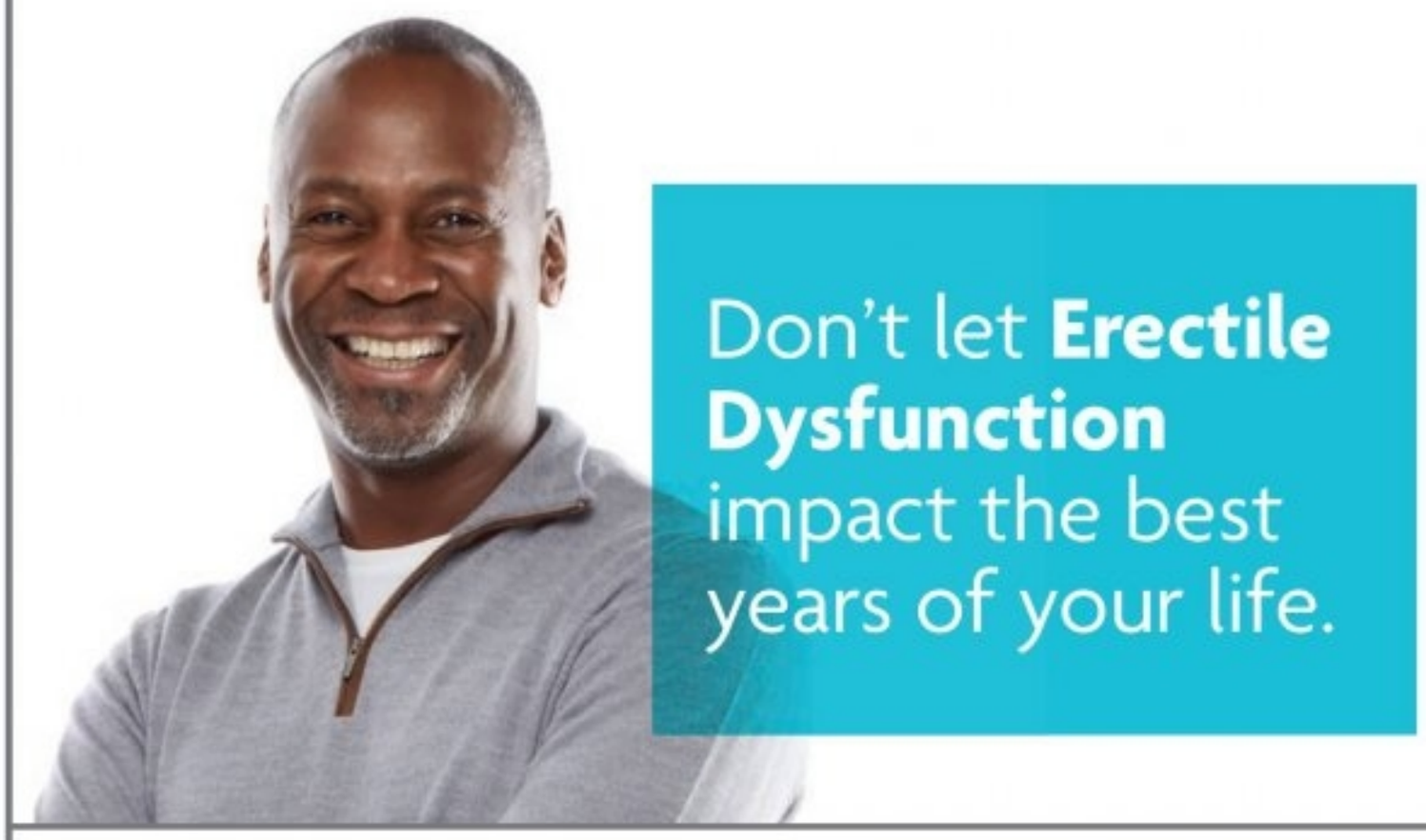
PerPETuate charges $1,300 for the first year if cells are deemed viable ($1,200 for culturing and $100 for storage). The annual fee to preserve these cells is $100. Cloning facilities have their own fees — ViaGen, which charges $1,600 for genetic preservation, charges $50,000 for dog cloning.

Is cloning worth the price?

Gillespie says dog cloning is "absolutely" worth it in the long run. "If you're gonna clone your dog, you're gonna clone your dog because it's the most responsive, it has a high level of intelligence, it's the best dog you've ever had. And there will be tremendous similarities."

Gillespie cited PerPETuate's first clone of 2018 as an example. Billy Bean, a full-grown donor dog, and Gunni, her clone puppy, are both Black Labs with smaller builds. When Billy Bean was little, she emitted a "bad odor" for a few weeks that ultimately went away, and now, her owner told Gillespie that Gunni started to emit the exact same odor.

Cloning technology like this could eventually correct defective genes and eliminate genetic diseases, Gillespie said. "This technology is greatly understood, greatly underestimated and has a lot of potential."



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Could roommates help college students receive the mental health services they need?

Researchers at NYU looked at how sharing a living space helps people understand each others' levels of distress, which may lead to a better safety net.

KRISTIN TOUSSAINT
kristin.toussaint@metro.us

It's no secret that college students are under a lot of stress, but getting those students to seek help still proves to be a challenge.

Roommates may be the key to connecting students to the mental health support they need, according to a study from New York University.

"This is a really important topic. College should be an exciting moment of people's lives, but oftentimes you see a lot of college kids experiencing a lot of stress and difficulties, including social and academic [challenges]," said Qi Xu, a doctoral student in NYU's Department of Psychology. "Sometimes, there's really bad outcomes that could lead to."

Suicide is a leading cause of death among college students in the United States, according to the Suicide Prevention Research Center. Most schools have mental-health initiatives and outreach efforts, but Xu and other NYU researchers wondered if roommates could help.

"Often, college and universities are pretty proactive in reaching out to students, providing different counseling services for mental health problems, but students hesitate about whether they should seek out this support," Xu said.

Resident assistants in dorms are commonly trained to spot signs of mental-health concerns, but because roommates tend to spend a lot of time together, they might have better insight into each others' emotions.

Researchers asked more than 180 pairs of roommates at multiple universities to first rate their own level of distress and then rate how distressed they thought their roommates were.

Students were pretty sensitive to the mental suffering their roommates felt — and tend to think that that distress level matches their own — but they're still underestimating how stressed out their roommates actually are, the study found.

This is useful insight, Xu said, because if people tend to underrate their roommates, it means schools might need to pay extra attention when students report something.

Because students might not know what to do in these situations, the researchers suggested roommates be trained, like the RAs are, to spot signs of distress.

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Roommates should be trained to spot signs of distress so they can help each other get the mental health support they need, new research suggests. ISTOCK

identify and respond to the distress of peers might have the benefit of encouraging conversations among roommates about what actions each might take if he or she notices another experiencing extreme distress," the researchers wrote in their paper, published Monday in the journal Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.

Xu considered that putting an added responsibility on students' shoulders to watch out for their roommates' well-being may add to their own stress levels, but she said that previous research has shown that those who are providing support for others experience a psychological benefit, as well.

Ultimately, more research needs to be done, and Xu believes this is worth looking into.

"This is a really important topic not only from a research perspective but for the general implication, for the community health of universities," she said. "I hope our research can lift up and … draw public attention to these topics."

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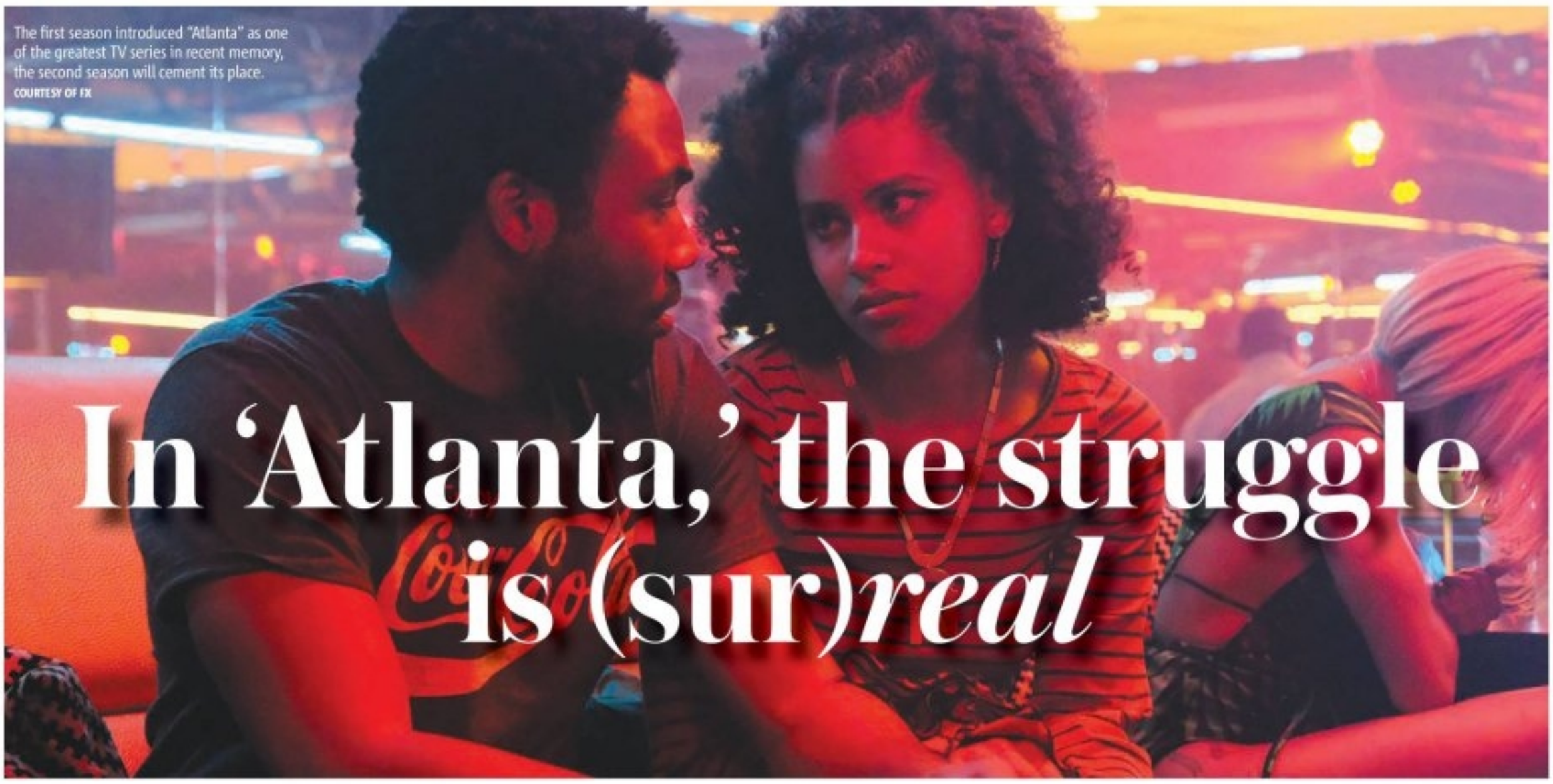

The first season introduced "Atlanta" as one of the greatest TV series in recent memory, the second season will cement its place.
COURTESY OF FX

In 'Atlanta,' the struggle is (sur)*real*

The series — and the current trend of critically adored black stories — is more than just a fad.

RACHAEL VAUGHAN CLEMMONS
rachael.clemmons@metro.us

The first three episodes of the second season of "Atlanta" — formally known as "Atlanta Robbin' Season," for the spike in armed robberies before Christmas — are laced with a palpable excitement. Creator, writer and star Donald Glover has, with the help his co-stars and co-writers, honed a rare and unique voice for this rare and unique series. It's incredibly special. There's a fine precision evident in every scene and it lets the show seesaw from wacky, fantastical gags played for laughs to authentic musings about poverty, racism and social media. The struggle is real — but it's surreal, too.

It would be easy then to throw "Atlanta" in with what appears to be a trend of the mainstream accepting and loving stories that focus on black lives from the perspective of the black people living them. It would be even easier to boast that black popular culture is having a moment right now, with the recent influx of critically adored fare like "Black Panther," "Insecure" and "Get Out."

But the word "moment" suggests that this time is fleeting.

"I don't want anything to be a moment," Brian Tyree Henry (aka Paper Boi) told The New York Times in an interview with the rest of the cast. "I want to be here and have our place in the pantheon. Avenues are finally open."

> *"The word 'moment' suggests that this time is fleeting."*

Open indeed. Thanks to the current state of peak TV, stories have gotten more interesting, less prosaic. And "Atlanta" is a series that goes above and beyond, setting itself apart from its peers and seamlessly blending the real and the fantastical. Case in point? In the premiere tonight, we meet Earn's uncle who keeps a golden pistol under his bed and a pet alligator in the spare room. No big.

It is weirder and bigger than many series before it, black-led or otherwise. And that it's a bona fide hit confirms what we've been saying all along: We want more of this. We want original stories from different perspectives. Give us more "Atlanta," and less reboots ("Roseanne," looking at you because, come on).

It's more than a trend. It's a long awaited shift. There have always been excellent stories about black people. As a person whose childhood was filled with soundtracks to every Whitney Houston starring vehicle — "The Bodyguard" and "Waiting to Exhale" remain favorites, 20-odd years later — plus constant viewings of films like "Boomerang" and series like "Living Single," I can attest that this isn't new. Perhaps what's new is the critics paying attention — and the powers that be finally acquiescing to giving the people what they want.

And thank Dumbledore. "Our job is to make great things and happen to be black," Glover said in the same New York Times interview. "That's it."

With "Atlanta," he's done that. And then some.

"Atlanta Robbin' Season" premieres tonight on FX at 10 p.m.

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The high price of *insta-fame*

Actress Michelle Monaghan on her new film, "The Vanishing Of Sidney Hall."

GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

With the 24-hour news cycle, the rise of social media and the constant prying eyes of the paparazzi, it has never been harder to be a celebrity, as they're now attacked and over-analyzed from all angles seemingly every minute of every day.

While "The Vanishing of Sidney Hall" doesn't explicitly examine modern celebrity culture, it does focus on the impact of sudden success and the unyielding pressure that comes with being in the public eye. Especially when it happens to someone so young.

Michelle Monaghan stars as Sidney Hall's mother in the mystery, which is set over three time periods and focuses on the character writing a novel at 18, the aftermath of its huge success when he is 24 and then his disappearance at 30. We chatted with Monaghan about the film, the impact of instant fame and why distributor A24 is so important.

Monaghan stars opposite Logan Lerman in the mystery drama. A24

GETTY IMAGES

What first attracted you to "The Vanishing of Sidney Hall"?
Obviously the writing was so strong. It was such an original story and very unique in the way it is told, in its use of flashbacks and how the story and all the characters are all revealed. It is very serious and compelling and heartbreaking in that way. That made it very special. The role was unlike anything I have ever done before. And I loved the chance to work with Logan. He such a great young actor, and is committed to his craft and to this story.

Did you enjoy playing such a cruel character?
On paper she seems very cruel, and she is cruel. I also hope there is an element where you understand her. I latched onto the idea that she didn't emotionally evolve beyond that point. Most people grow into the idea of becoming a mom. You get the feelings of being maternal, but she just seemed to miss that step. She seems to have acquired a sense of arrested development.

Does the depiction of Sidney Hall and his instant fame feel timely?
People have always been enthralled by the idea of something being new, especially when it is made by somebody so young. They then put people on pedestals. More so now though it is fleeting, and these moments in the spotlight come and go so quickly. So for someone who has success at a very young age it would be hard to navigate such an avalanche of adulation and success, especially when it is taken away so quickly.

Talk about working with A24 on the film, they seem like the last bastion of independent cinema.
I definitely tip my hat to A24. It is so important for any distribution company, or any writers, directors, actors, producers to support independent films. Especially because sadly I think they are a bit of a dying breed. They know that there are very different ways for people to view films.

So you have to marry these two worlds, and know who your audience is, and how they want to watch films. They've been able to find that balance in a really smart way, and produce an extraordinary slate of movies.

"The Vanishing Of Sidney Hall" will be released into select cinemas on March 2, and is already exclusively available on Direct TV.

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7 Things you can't miss at the Philadelphia Flower Show

Celebrities will be there, too.

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If you go

March 3 to March 11
The Pennsylvania Convention Center
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theflowershow.com

Dance the night away at "Flowers after Hours" at the Philadelphia Flower PROVIDED

Surround yourself with butterflies at Butterflies Live. PROVIDED

Be sure to keep your phone charged to take lots of flower pics. ROB CARDILLO PHOTOGRAPHY

This Friday, The Philadelphia Flower Show comes to the Pennsylvania Convention Center for 2018. Presented by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the popular event attracts attendees from all over the country and beyond.

"I think it's one of those truly unique Philadelphia offerings," says Kevin Feeley, communications manager for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. "It's the largest indoor flower show in the United States and one of the largest in the world. It also ushers in the arrival of spring and not too many events can do that."

This year's theme is "The Wonders of Water" and aside by being surrounded by thousands upon thousands of flowers, you can count on some special offerings at The Philadelphia Flower Show. Here are seven things you can't miss.

1. The Rainforest Entrance Garden
The moment you step inside the Philadelphia Flower Show, you will be immersed into a rainforest with the Rainforest Entrance Garden. "It features a 25-foot waterfall, a canopy with plants, flowers and vines coming down and multiple ponds," Feeley says.

2. Flowers After Hours
On the first Saturday evening of the show, there's a special dance party called "Flowers After Hours." This year's theme is '70s disco and guests can enjoy a special performance from legendary '70s musical act The Village People featuring Ray Simpson. "Robert Drake from WXPN is also providing music. Bumble will be there with a photobooth and it also has wine and spirit tastings," Feeley says. "But you'll need a separate ticket.

3. Fido Friday
Even your dog can enjoy the beauty of the Philadelphia Flower Show with Fido Friday. On the last Friday of the show, guests are invited to bring their four-legged friends to walk the flower show. There will even be a "yappy hour" and a "pupperazzi" step and repeat, where you can pose for selfies with your dog.

4. Butterflies Live
Can you imagine being surrounded by over 1,000 butterflies? You can have that experience at Butterflies Live at the Philadelphia Flower Show. More than 20 different species of butterflies will be fluttering around the space, providing the perfect photo opp for your Instagram feed. "It's definitely one of the more popular attractions at the show," Feeley says.

5. The Garden Tea
Take a break from walking around the Flower Show for some tea and petite sandwiches at The Garden Tea. There are two seatings daily, at 11:30 a.m. and 2:45 p.m., from March 3 to March 10. "It's nice to have some tea with tea sandwiches and relax," Feeley says. "The room is filled with all kinds of plants like the exhibit hall. It's $28 per person and does require a reservation."

6. Martha Stewart will be there.
The domestic diva herself, Martha Stewart, will be at the 2018 Philadelphia Flower Show, signing books with her creative director, Kevin Sharkey, in the Designer's Studio on Tuesday, March 6. At 5 p.m. there will be a presentation, and from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., she'll be signing copies of her book, "Martha's Flowers: A Practical Guide to Growing, Gathering, and Enjoying."

7. Smokey Robinson will also be there.
The 2018 Philadelphia Flower Show has another music legend to add to its list of attendees: Smokey Robinson. The 78-year-old R&B singer has launched his own line of wines and will be autographing bottles this Saturday and Sunday.

For more information on the 2018 Philadelphia Flower Show, visit: theflowershow.com.

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FOOD & DRINK

ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED

The Little Lion Fire Benefit

This fundraiser supports employees displaced by the four-alarm fire in Old City last week. The owners host the event, but out of Mad Rex Restaurant and Virtual Reality Lounge, where there will be food—from Sysco and Mad Rex—with drinks included in the ticket price. The Little Lion is accepting gift donations for a silent auction.
March 4, 1 p.m. Mad Rex , 1000 Frankford Ave. gofundme.com/thelittlelion $35

MUSIC

Corey Smith

Charismatic country act Corey Smith, now on his 10th album, brings his popular tour to Philly, focusing on latest LP "Getting' is Good"—written entirely by him and claimed to be his most personal effort yet. Kasey Tyndall, with single "Everything is Texas," opens.
March 2, 7:30 p.m. Union Transfer 1026 Spring Garden St. utphilly.com $22

Philly Soul Jam

My Funky Brethren, a love-and-good-vibes soul band from Philadelphia, headlines this soul showcase. Also among the lineup: gospel singer Shae Davis, DJ Meech and smooth-voiced R&B and rap singer Shacara Diane.
March 3, 8:30 p.m. MilkBoy 1100 Chestnut St. milkboyphilly.com $15

VOCES8

VOCES8, an eight-person ensemble that excels with Renaissance polyphony, bands together with choirs from the C.W. Henry School, Germantown Recovery Community and Our Lady of Confidence Day School to showcase singing as an accessible art form. VOCES8, notably, maintains a method program that uses rhythm and sound to promote literacy and numeracy among a variety of ability levels.
March 4, 3 p.m. World Café Live 3025 Walnut St. worldcafelive.com $20

COMEDY

Tom Green

A comedy icon from the '90s and '00s, Green kicks off a multi-city tour in Philadelphia with three nights of performances. Green is currently host of "The Tom Green Podcast."
Through March 3 Helium Comedy Club 2031 Sansom St. Philadelphia-heliumcomedy.com $22

MUSIC

ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED

West Philly Orchestra Purim Party

The West Philadelphia Orchestra plays traditional Jewish songs to celebrate the Purim holiday of salvation. Susan Watz and Dan Blacksberg join with ancient instruments in a convivial environment—with beer, wine and signature cocktails from World Café Life, of course.
March 1, 8 p.m. World Café Live, 3025 Walnut St. worldcafelive.com $15

THEATER

Pride and Prejudice

Douglas Martin's 2017 ballet spin on the full-length Jane Austen play, written in 1813 about the English class system, transforms the treasured story through movement. This guest event will show Friday and Saturday at the Zellerbach Theatre. **Through March 3 Annenberg Center 3680 Walnut St. annenbergcenter.org $45**

Price is Right Live!

Prepare for a more interactive theater experience: audience members are picked to, yes, play for prizes like dazzling kitchen appliances while enjoying the cast's theatrics and a live performance of the iconic music theme. Registration is required to be eligible to

play. **Through March 4**
Harrah's Resort Atlantic City
777 Harrah's Blvd., Atlantic City
priceisrightlive.com $40

MISC.

Flower Show After Hours: Disco Fever

A way to beat the crowds for the standard show while also indulging in libations, this after-hours disco-themed Flower Show party features a performance from the Village People. Wines will be provided by New York Finger Lakes, riffing off the show's water theme this year.
March 3, 8:30 p.m.
Pennsylvania Convention Center
1101 Arch St.
theflowershow.com $75

West Laurel Hill Duffy's Cut

Fifty-seven Irish immigrant workers died from violence and cholera just outside Malvern in 1832; this annual ceremony at Laurel Hill honors their memory with a service and procession from Duffy's Cut Pipers. The event is timed for St. Patrick's Day.
March 4, 2 p.m.
West Laurel Hill Cemetery
225 Belmont Ave.
westlaurelhill.com Free

FOOD & DRINK

Jet Wine Bar Oscars Party

Keep it classy and bubbly at Jet Wine Bar, which is offering a $50 wine and caviar pairing. Guests can also enjoy caviar as a la carte small plates, priced from $12 to $15 each, along with a trio of sparkling wines—from France, Spain and Washington—priced at $10 a glass. **March 4, 8 p.m. Jet Wine Bar , 1525 South St. jetwinebar.com Pay as you go**

FOOD & DRINK

Square 1682 Oscars Party

To really celebrate the spirit of the Oscars, Square 1682 rolls out a red-carpet entrance at 8 p.m. After, viewers watch in the lounge with complimentary truffle popcorn, with film-themed cocktails—like the "Lady Bird," with gin, lemon and bubbles—for a happy-hour price of $7. **March 4, 8 p.m. Square 1682. 121 S. 17th St. square1682.com Pay as you go**

Ocean Prime Oscars Viewing Party

Catch the show on the restaurant's screens while sipping $10 signature cocktails, like a cucumber gimlet or whiskey clover. Guests receive complimentary truffle popcorn, with a small plates menu planned by Chef Jen Grosskruger for the evening.
March 4, 4 p.m. Ocean Prime 124 S. 15th St. ocean-prime.com

LGBT

Tavern and Tiaras

A Broadway-themed drag show held in the upstairs bar, this showcase features performances from "Rent," Hairspray," "Chicago" and other crowd-pleasing favorites. Hosted by Astala Vista. **March 2, 8 p.m. Tavern on the Lake**
101 N. Main St., Hightstown $15

Drag Wars Opening Night

The popular, ongoing drag competition debuts its ninth season with a new cast but a familiar face as host: former "RuPaul's Drag Race" contestant Mimi Imfurst. The competition will run through May 19. **March 3, 8 p.m. Voyeur Nightclub, 1221 Saint James Street**
voyeurnightclub.com $10

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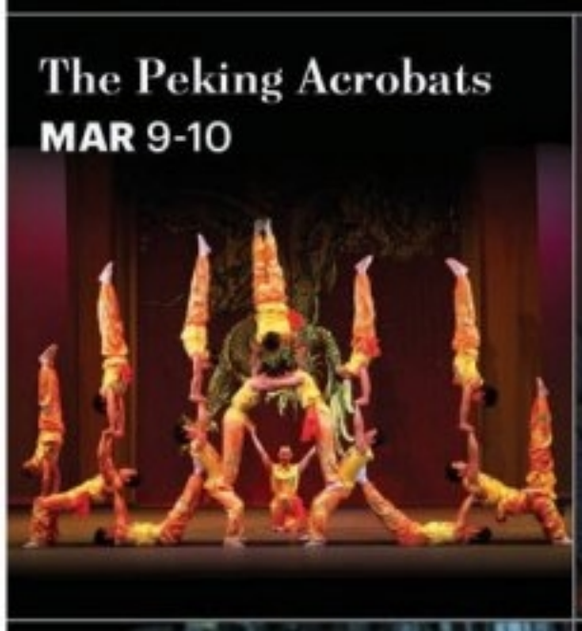

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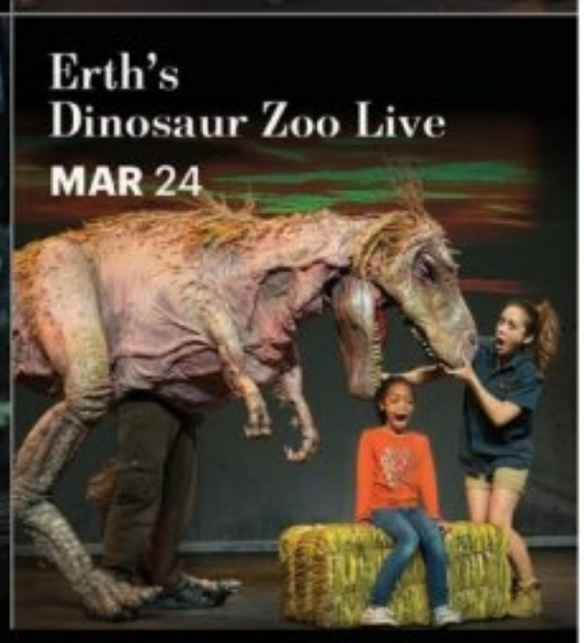

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Fodor's Travel

Being born into a royal family isn't the only way to experience castle living. While the bad old medieval times are behind us, spending a few days at the stunning Ashford Castle on the Galway-Mayo border will help you realize just why it's good to be the king/queen.

Even if you're not the glass-slipper type, an amazing few days of luxury, history, charm and adventure will do anyone a world of good.

A fairytale setting

Netflix's "The Crown" plus a bad case of Meghan Markle envy means everybody wants to stay in a castle.. And why not? If you're going to stay in a castle, it should look, feel and be majestic, and Ireland's Ashford Castle ticks all these boxes.

Lording over the charming little village of Cong on the Mayo-Galway border and set on 350 stunning acres hugging the shores of Lough Corrib, Ashford Castle is consistently, and justifiably, ranked one of the world's best hotels. A 13th century Anglo-Norman stronghold turned luxury hotel (and in between, a home to the Guinness family), Ashford was restored to its full historic splendor with a complete $75 million overhaul in 2015.

Along with all necessary updates, the careful restoration brought exquisite new rooms, luxurious bathrooms, enhanced public spaces, elegant dining rooms, a new spa, a plush 32-seat cinema and more.

Castle feels

Sure, landscaped grounds, sweeping staircases, a moat and turreted towers all provide the required Instagram backdrops to let everyone know that you are staying in a castle, but it's the quiet efficiency, attention to every detail, and obvious sense of pride and care at every turn at Ashford Castle that makes you feel like you are staying in a castle. Add a staff that could be character actors for Irish wit, hospitality, and charm and you know you are staying in an Irish castle.

The royal spa

Keep your head in the clouds

In the good old days, a queen could just off someone's head for kicks, but these days we have less messy ways to get an adrenaline rush, and you'll find plentiful outlets on the grounds of Ashford Castle. Forget taking tea all day (not that we'd judge), the modern queen takes advantage of onsite activities ranging from falconry, horseback riding, golf, and cycling, to fishing, boating, clay-shooting, and archery.

A great way to keep your head above the commoners is the onsite zip line course, which allows a bird's eye view of the castle as you zip through the woods. And if you enjoy hanging out on the treetops, challenge yourself to a tree-climbing exercise with the tallest tree-climb in Ireland, a 164-foot tree planted in the late 1800s by the Guinness family.

Walk a hawk

Did you know that while you might initially squirm at the sight of fresh dead mice, you will be plucking them like pretty flowers when you realize it makes a magnificent bird cut across the sky and swoop down to your gloved fist? Ashford Castle's School of Falconry is the oldest Falconry school in Ireland and the private one-hour woodland walk with a harris hawk, either on your wrist or following closely and coming to you on command, is a truly enchanting experience.

Summon the hounds

Hollywood princesses might prop ornamental pooches in their Chanel purses, but queens prefer the company of formidable Irish wolfhounds. Ashford Castle is home to two gentle giants, Cronan and Garvan, and the two noble brothers make a daily appearance in the castle from 10-11 a.m. Guests get to meet and play with the dogs and take pictures.

Early risers can accompany these magnificent creatures on a morning woodland walk (rain boots and coats are provided by the castle); just meet at reception at 8.30 a.m.

It's good to be the queen

A spa treatment, or spa day, is essential to a restful escape and Ashford Castle's lavish spa and indoor pool offers luxury and facilities with stunning views of Lough Corrib. Decorated in calming grays, creams and greens, the spa boasts a stunning indoor relaxation pool housed in a bronze conservatory, complete with seashell chandeliers and a Tree of Life mosaic.

Treatment options include hot stone massage, aroma and marine therapy, regenerating facials, detoxifying wraps, and pampering beauty treatments, as well as a variety of Hammam sessions and other wellness treatments.

Ashford Castle underwent a recent renovation for all the modern comforts in an old-school setting. ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED

Getting here

If your vacation budget is not exactly like a queen's, Norwegian Airlines has made Ireland a hub and will get you there with scratch left to splurge on accommodations.

Norwegian offers flights to Shannon, Dublin, and Cork airports in Ireland from Newburgh, New York and Providence, Rhode Island.

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NFL head coach power rankings | by the Metro Sports Staff

No. 1

Doug Pederson (last year: 24)

Matt Burke, Metro Boston Sports Editor: For the record, "Philly Special" was an illegal formation. Nonetheless Doug deserves No. 1.

No. 2

Bill Belichick (last :1)

Burke: Pederson outcoached Belichick in the Super Bowl. But let's be real: On Opening Day 2018, every GM in the NFL would rather have Belichick leading their team than a guy with two years experience as a head coach.

No. 3

Sean McVay (last: 30)

Evan Macy, Metro Philadelphia Sports Editor: I am sore about this because he didn't deserve Coach of the Year over Pederson. It really makes no sense. Even his regular season record was worse. But he did do a hell of a job turning around the Rams.

No. 4

Doug Marrone (last: 25)

Burke: Marrone is one of the more underrated head coaches in the game. His stint in Buffalo was solid, and he nearly beat the Patriots in Foxborough with Blake Friggin' Bortles. He'll have plenty more Bortles after the QB's recent extension.

No. 5

Mike Zimmer (last: 17)

Macy: He reminds me of Pederson, coaching a team that wasn't expected to be this good this fast that overcame injury issues. I see buzz that the Vikings are trying to clear out their QBs to take a stab at getting Kirk Cousins. That could make Minnesota a true contender.

No. 6

Pete Carroll (last: 5)

Joe Pantorno, Metro New York Sports Editor: Injuries didn't make 2017 any easier for the Seahawks. But Carroll is the kind of coach that any player will go to war for. With a healthy roster next year, Seattle will in all likelihood be back near the top of the NFC again.

No. 7

Sean Payton (last: 14)

Macy: Payton has Brees coming back — probably — and two of the best running backs in the country in Alvin Kamara and Mark Ingram. And the defense was really, really good in 2017. I expect New Orleans to be among the NFC's best again.

No. 8

Mike McCarthy (last: 4)

Macy: I don't know how I feel about McCarthy. He is great with Rodgers healthy and awful without him. But he has won a Super Bowl. Is he a good coach? We'll see if he can return to the top of the NFC North with some fierce competition in Minnesota.

No. 9

Ron Rivera (last: 15)

Burke: The Panthers were a play away from beating the Saints. The Saints were a play away from beating the Vikings. Carolina is not that far away from true contention. And if Cam Newton has healthy weapons the offense can be much more consistent.

No. 10

Mike Tomlin (last: 2)

Burke: Tomlin flat-out cost his team wins over New England in December and Jacksonville in January. He had the better talent in both games, and couldn't get it done. Still, Pittsburgh's success in 2018 will ride on their ability to keep LeVeon Bell and the offense intact.

Best of the rest

11 — Dan Quinn (last: 3)
12 — Anthony Lynn (last: 31)
13 — Andy Reid (last: 7)
14 — Todd Bowles (last: 27)
15 — Sean McDermott (28)
16 — Kyle Shanahan (last: 23)
17 — John Harbaugh (last: 10)
18 — Bill O'Brien (last: 6)
19 — Mike Vrabel (rookie)
20 — Jon Gruden
21 — Jason Garrett (last: 9)
22 — Adam Gase (last: 8)
23 — Pat Shurmur (rookie)
24 — Jay Gruden (last: 16)
25 — Matt Patricia (rookie)

With 'a lot of turnover' expected, which Eagles could be on chopping block?

The Eagles brass spoke publicly for the first time since the Super Bowl parade a few weeks ago, and the focus has turned as the calendar has to the 2018 season.

New coaches will flank Doug Pederson, as Mike Groh assumes the vacated role of Frank Reich as offensive coordinator. Duce Staley will be an assistant head coach, address the team in Pederson's absence and take on a greater role in the passing game. A new wide receivers coach is yet to be hired.

What does this mean specifically? Well the Birds aren't content to stay the same. They want to improve.

"From our perspective, we have to find a way to get better," Eagles GM Howie Roseman said. "We have to improve our football team. We understand that nothing is given to us in 2018. If we say, 'Hey we're going to bring everything back and do everything the same,' we're going to get our ass kicked."

The Eagles need to move on from some players to create the room for some new blood. There are a number of candidates to take their Super Bowl rings to other teams (or retirement). Here is a look at who might not be in South Philly anymore come the spring:

Nick Foles, QB

Of course, Foles is the most noteworthy name and he could be in a new uniform next season. The Eagles say they intend to talk with the Super Bowl MVP to ascertain what it is he wants. They will then decide whether they'll keep him for his last contract year or move him for cap relief and draft picks

Torrey Smith, WR

His contract includes a team option for $5 million. With Mack Hollins a capable No. 3 receiver, the Birds can't afford Smith's return.

LeGarrette Blount, RB

Blount was a key piece of the Eagles incredible running game but the ground game is in good hands with Corey Clement and Jay Ajayi next year.

Mychal Kendricks, LB

Kendricks can be cut to save money or traded to save more. You'll notice Nigel Bradham isn't on this list — he's Philly's top priority and Kendricks could be a casualty.

All signs point to the departure of running back LeGarrette Blount after one season. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Darren Sproles, RB

Will he retire? Will he return? He's a free agent in 2018.

Trey Burton, TE

He's better than a third tight end and will be able to get starter money elsewhere. He's a free agent.

Patrick Robinson, CB

Robinson played far beyond his $775,000 salary last season and was a playoff hero. He will get paid more with another team.

Donnie Jones, P

Jones is already gone, the first Eagles' Super Bowl champion to ride into the sunset.

Jason Peters, LT

With more than $10.6 million due to Peters this year, the future Hall of Famer will either be cut, restructure or retire.

Brent Celek, TE

Celek can save the Birds $4 million if he's cut and $5 million if he retires. He's also an unaffordable luxury with the cap issues Philly has.

Vinny Curry, DE

Curry carries an $11 million cap hit with him next season — a little more money than he's probably worth. He may be hard to move but the Eagles may try to trade or restructure him.

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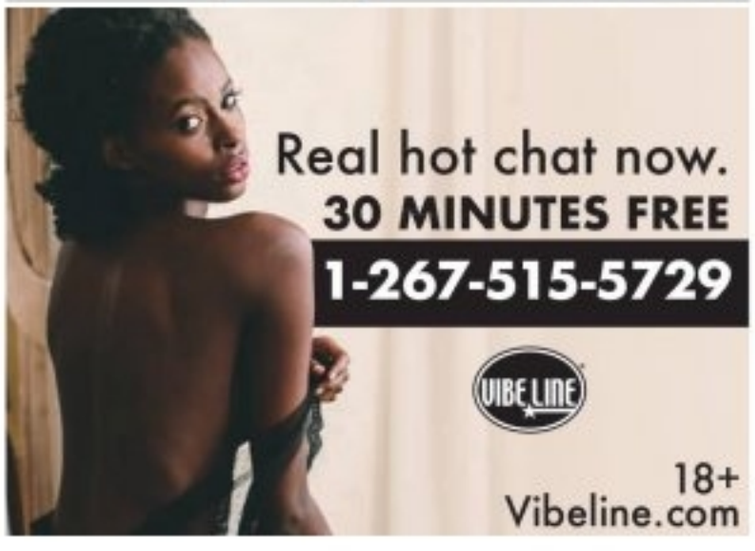

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18 Aha! (2 wds.)
19 Doctor's assistant
20 Laundry additive
22 Composted
24 Store window word
26 Kyoto cash
27 Watch
31 Long ago
33 Type of prof
37 Toughens up
39 Pharaoh's river
41 Sedan
42 Tennis gear
44 Public image
46 Mdse. bars
47 Baby buggy, in London
49 Speckled fishes
50 Recipe direction
52 Suit, for short
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57 -- -do-well
59 Mummy locales
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68 Lascivious glance
70 Placed
72 Eating places
73 Kyrgyzstan mountains
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75 Window covering
76 Irascibility
77 Feudal estate

Down

1 Watch chain
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6 Without thought
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13 Put in a lawn
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23 Grommet
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27 Flu bug
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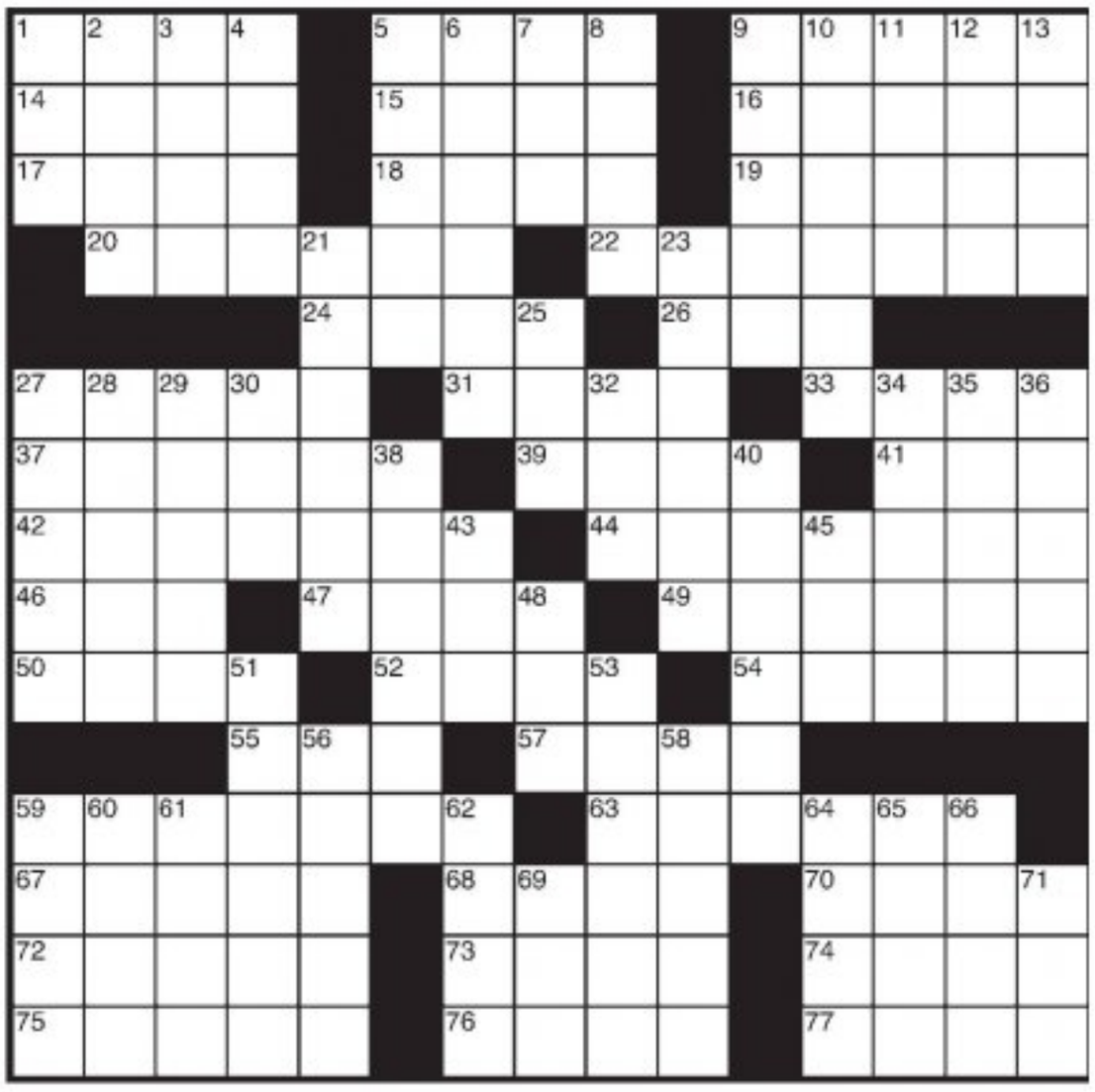
65 Jaipur princess
66 Fork part
69 O.T. judge
71 Phone button



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easy

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hard

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	3			7				4

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries You can take action, but don't expect it to be smooth sailing. You'll face opposition, setbacks and stress. Be prepared to alter your course to ensure success.

Taurus Avoid joint financial ventures. What you do on your own will prove to be a better way to spend your time and money. Celebrate your success with someone you love.

Gemini Emotional matters will surface regarding partnership issues. Do your best to understand the motives behind what someone is asking of you.

Cancer Listen attentively and get along with the people you need on your side. Networking will give you the opportunity to convince others to listen to your plans.

Leo You'll be dancing to a different beat when it comes to work and getting things done. Don't underestimate someone trying to take control. Don't get angry, get moving.

Virgo The more you interact with others, the better. The information you are given and the related ideas that sprout will bring you closer to the people you enjoy working alongside.

Libra Take care of any matters pertaining to financial, medical or legal institutions before you move on to more enjoyable tasks. Protect your assets and personal documents.

Scorpio Your help will be valued and will lead to better relationships with your peers and employer. Embrace change and the chance to use your unique talents to get ahead.

Sagittarius You'll be caught in the middle if you meddle in other people's affairs. Keep your distance from anyone trying to lure you into something questionable.

Capricorn Reconnecting with someone from your past will let you revisit things you used to do. An opportunity that comes your way should be considered carefully.

Aquarius Listen attentively to others' viewpoints and consider every angle of a certain situation. Having a precise view will help you find a workable solution to a problem.

Pisces Listen to people's advice, but do what works best for you. Drawing from all sources of information will give you a well-rounded view of what's possible. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

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P	A	L	E	■	F	L	A	N	■	A	D	A	G	E
A	R	M	S	■	G	A	M	Y	■	S	O	L	A	R
■	T	A	I	C	H	I	■	A	S	T	R	I	D	E
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